Pertinent Questions

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HARIJAN

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IF 'HARIJAN' IS SUPPRESSED

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

Anxious inquiries are being made as to what I would do if *Harijan* was suppressed. Rumours are afloat that orders are on their way. I would ask inquirers not to be agitated if *Harijan* is suppressed. The paper may be suppressed. The manager has been instructed to stop the paper immediately orders are served on him. It is no part of the movement to publish *Harijan* in defiance of orders. But *Harijan* may be suppressed, its message cannot be, so long as I live. Indeed, the spirit will survive the dissolution of the body and somehow speak through the millions. For, with due apologies to Veer Saverkar and Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah, I claim to represent the joint spirit of millions of Hindus and Mussalmans, and other non-Hindus who call themselves children of Hindustan. I am living, and hope to have the stregth to die, for the freedom of every inhabitant of this land.

Let us see what *Harijan* is today. It is being published in English, Hindi, Urdu (2 places), Tamil, Telugu (2 places), Ooriya, Marathi, Gujarati, Kanaree (2 places). It is ready to be published in Bengali only awaiting legal permission. Applications have come from Assam, Kerala and Sindh. All but one edition have a large circulation compared to the other weeklies. I suggest that it is no small matter to suppress such a paper. The loss will be more Government's than the people's. They will incur much ill-will by suppressing a popular paper.

Let it be known too that *Harijan* is a viewspaper as distinguished from a newspaper. People buy and read it not for amusement but instruction and regulating their daily conduct. They literally take their weekly lessons in non-violence. It cannot pay the authorities to deprive the people of their weekly food.

And *Harijan* is not an anti-British paper. It is pro-British from head to foot. It wishes well to the British people. It tells them in the friendliest manner where in its opinion they err.

The Anglo-Indian papers I know are Government favourites. They represent a dying Imperialism. Whether Britain wins or loses, Imperialism has to die. It is certainly of no use now to the British people whatever it may have been in the past. In that sense therefore Anglo-Indian papers are really anti-British as *Harijan* is pro-British. The former are disseminating hatred day by day by hiding the reality and bolstering Imperialism which is ruining Britain. It is in order to arrest the progress of that ruin that, frail as I am, I have put my whole soul into a movement which, if it is designed to free India from the imperial yoke, is equally intended to contribute the mightiest war-effort in their behalf. If they suppress *Harijan* let them know what they will seek to suppress.

Let me add too that without needing any pressure from outside, I am using the greatest restraint in the choice of printing matter. Nothing is being consciously published that would give any clue to the 'enemy' as to military objectives or dispositions. Care is being exercised to avoid all exaggeration or sensational matter. Adjectives and adverbs are well-weighed before being used. And they know that I am ever ready to acknowledge errors and mend them.

Sevagram, 12-7-'42

Notes

In Case of Illness

Some one tells me that B. B. C. have been asking how I can hope to lead the impending non-violent movement if I am ill and bed-ridden. Well, the doctors have not pronounced me such. I am fatigued and they advise rest and a change to a cooler place for a fortnight. I am struggling to give myself rest. But sometimes duty, may be passion or infatuation, forbids it. But the relevant fact is that so long as the reason is unimpaired, physical illness is no bar to the conduct of a non-violent struggle. The peremptory belief in non-violent conduct is that all urge comes from God—the Unseen, even Unfelt save through unconquerable faith. Nevertheless as a seeker and experimenter I know that even physical illness, even fatigue is counted as a defect in a non-violent person. *Mens sana in corpore sano* is literally accepted by votaries of truth and non-violence. But that is said of perfect men. Alas I am far from the perfection I am aiming at.

Timely Action

Numerous inquiries have been made as to what should be done by evacuees and others who find it difficult and even impossible to comply with orders. The comprehensive instructions of the Working Committee in the matter are quite timely. The persons affected should know that these instructions are no part of the impending movement. They are necessary in every case for the very existence of the persons affected. Therefore, as the Working Committee very properly say, every precaution should be taken for obtaining relief through negotiation. Disregard of orders should be resorted to only when it becomes peremptory. Needless to say there is no room here for profiteering or exhorbitant demands.

Sevagram, 12-7-'42

Congress and War Contracts

Q. Is it proper for Congressmen, especially members of Congress Committees, to accept war contracts ?

A. This question should be properly addressed to the Working Committee. Personally however I think that Congressmen cannot accept war contracts.

Sevagram, 10-7-'42 M. K. G.

WORKING COMMITTEE'S RESOLUTIONS

1

Resolution passed by the Working Committee at Wardha on July 14, 1942 :

Events happening from day to day, and the experience that the people of India are passing through, confirm the opinion of Congressmen that British rule in India must end immediately, not merely because foreign domination, even at its best, is an evil in itself and a continuing injury to the subject people, but because India in bondage can play no effective part in defending herself and in affecting the fortunes of the war that is desolating humanity. The freedom of India is thus necessary not only in the interest of India but also for the safety of the world and for the ending of nazism, fascism, militarism and other forms of imperialism, and the aggression of one nation over another.

Ever since the outbreak of the world war, the Congress has studiedly pursued a policy of non-embarrassment. Even at the risk of making its satyagraha ineffective, it deliberately gave it a symbolic character, in the hope that this policy of non-embarrassment, carried to its logical extreme, would be duly appreciated and that real power would be transferred to popular representatives, so as to enable the nation to make its fullest contribution towards the realisation of human freedom throughout the world, which is in danger of being crushed. It had also hoped that negatively nothing would be done which was calculated to tighten Britain's strangle-hold on India.

These hopes have, however, been dashed to pieces. The abortive Cripps proposals showed in the clearest possible manner that there was no change in the British Government's attitude towards India and that the British hold on India was in no way to be relaxed. In the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, Congress representatives tried their utmost to achieve a minimum, consistent with the national demand, but to no avail. This frustration has resulted in a rapid and widespread increase of ill-will against Britain and a growing satisfaction at the success of Japanese arms. The Working Committee view this development with grave apprehension as this, unless checked, will inevitably lead to a passive acceptance of aggression. The Committee hold that all aggression must be resisted, for any submission to it must mean the degradation of the Indian people and the continuation of their subjection. The Congress is anxious to avoid the experience of Malaya, Singapore, and Burma and desires to build up resistance to any aggression on or invasion of India by the Japanese or any foreign power.

The Congress would change the present ill-will against Britain into good-will and make India a willing partner in a joint enterprise of securing freedom for the nations and peoples of the world and in the trials and tribulations which accompany it. This is only possible if India feels the glow of freedom.

The Congress representatives have tried their utmost to bring about a solution of the communal tangle. But this has been made impossible by the presence of the foreign Power whose long record has been to pursue relentlessly the policy of divide and rule. Only after the ending of foreign domination and intervention, can the present unreality give place to reality, and the people of India, belonging to all groups and parties, face India's problems and solve them on a mutually agreed basis. The present political parties, formed chiefly with a view to attract the attention of and influence the British Power, will then probably cease to function. For the first time in India's history, realisation will come home that princes, jagirdars, zamindars, and propertied and monied classes, derive their wealth and property from the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom essentially power and authority must belong. On the withdrawal of British Rule in India, responsible men and women of the country will come together to form a Provisional Government, representative of all important sections of the people of India, which will later evolve a scheme whereby a Constituent Assembly can be convened in order to prepare a constitution for the government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. Representatives of Free India and representatives of Great Britain will confer together for the adjustment of future relations and for the cooperation of the two countries as allies in the common task of meeting aggression. It is the earnest desire of the Congress to enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

In making the proposal for the withdrawal of British Rule from India, the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied Powers in their prosecution of the war, or in any way to encourage aggression on India or increased pressure on China by the Japanese or any other Power associated with the Axis group. Nor does the Congress intend to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the Allied Powers. The Congress is therefore agreeable to the stationing of the armed forces of the Allies in India, should they so desire, in order to ward off and resist Japanese or other aggression, and to protect and help China.

The proposal of withdrawal of the British Power from India was never intended to mean the physical withdrawal of all Britishers from India, and certainly not of those who would make India their home and live there as citizens and as equals with the others. If such withdrawal takes place with goodwill, it would result in establishing a stable Provisional Government in India and co-oporation between this Government and the United Nations in resisting aggression and helping China.

The Congress realises that there may be risks involved in such a course. Such risks, however, have to be faced by any country in order to achieve freedom

and, more especially at the present critical juncture, in order to save the conntry and the larger cause of freedom the world over from far greater risks and perils.

While, therefore, the Congress is impatient to achieve the national purpose, it wishes to take no hasty step and would like to avoid, in so far as is possible, any course of action that might embarrass the the United Nations. The Congress would plead with the British Power to accept the very reasonable and just proposal herein made, not only in the interest of India but also that of Britain and of the cause of freedom to which the United Nations proclaim their adherence.

Should however this appeal fail, the Congress cannot view without the gravest apprehension the continuation of the present state of affairs, involving a progressive deterioration in the situation and weakening of India's will and power to resist aggression. The Congress will then be reluctantly compelled to utilise all the non-violent strength it might have gathered since 1920, when it adopted Non-violence as part of its policy for the vindication of political rights and liberty. Such a wide-spread struggle would inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji. As the issues raised are of the most vital and far-reaching importance to the people of India as well as to the peoples of the United Nations, the Working Committee refer them to the All India Congress Commitee for final decision. For this purpose the A. I. C. C. will meet in Bombay on the seventh of August, 1942.

2

Re : Evacuation and Other Orders

Whereas complaints have been received from various places regarding Government orders for evacuation of villages, lands and buildings without due notice and proper compensation, seizure and destruction of country-boats, even where life is impossible without them, requisition of cycles, motor vehicles and carts without proper compensation and without regard for the needs of the civil population;

The Working Committee deem it necessary to issue the following instructions for the guidance of the people concerned and hope that the Government will take immediate and necessary steps to remove the grievances and that the people will carry out their instructions as circumstances demand, provided that in all cases before the final decision to disobey an order or resist any measure is taken, all possible avenues of negotiation and relief through negotiation shall be thoroughly explored.

With regard to evacuation and other orders involving loss, either temporary or permanent, of landed property of any kind, full compensation should be demanded. In fixing the compensation the factors to be taken into consideration are the value of the land and the crops, the inconvenience and expense likely to be caused to the holder of the land by having to move to another place, and the difficulty and delay likely to be involved in obtaining other land where the dispossessed landholder could settle.

Wherever possible, arrangement should be made for providing other land to agriculturists where their agricultural land is acquired. Where this is impossible compensation in money should be paid.

Value of trees, water-channels, and wells etc. taken over or destroyed should be included in the compensation.

In case of temporary acquisition of agricultural land the full value of the crop plus 15% of it should be paid for each crop lost and when the occupation by Government terminates compensation should be paid for restoring the land to its previous conditions for agricultural purposes.

Where the bulk of the land of an agriculturist is acquired and the balance left over is so small that it may not be worth cultivating, the balance too should be acquired.

Houses where acquired should be fully paid for. Where the whole or bulk of the agricultural land of an agriculturist is acquired and only his house is left over, the house should also be acquired by paying full compensation if the agriculturist so desires.

Where a house is to be occupied temporarily for Government purposes fair rent should be paid and the owner compensated for the inconvenience and discomfort caused.

No one should be required to vacate his house without arrangement being made elsewhere for his residence, and full compensation should be paid for transport of the evacuee's belongings and for his maintenance for a reasonable period to enable him to find suitable occupation in his new surroundings.

Compensation should in all cases be paid promptly and on the spot by a responsible officer and not at the head-quarters of a District. In case no agreement is reached between the authorities and the evacuee regarding the amount of compensation and the matter has to be referred to a tribunal for decision, the amount of compensation proposed by the authorities should be paid forthwith and should not be withheld pending the adjudication of the claim.

There should be no interference with the use or disposal of private property except with the consent of the owner or on payment of adequate compensation.

In case of requisition of boats full compensation should be demanded and no boats should be surrendered till the question of compensation is settled. In areas surrounded by water where boats are indispensable for normal everyday life they should not be surrendered at all.

Fishermen who depend upon their boats for earning their livelihood should be compensated for loss of their employment in addition to the price of their boat.

In case of requisition of cycles, motor vehicles, carts etc. full compensation should be demanded and until the question of compensation is settled they should not be parted with.

In view of scarcity of salt and apprehended famine of it due to war conditions, facilities should be provided for collection, preparation and transport of salt on the sea-coast and in inland areas, free of duty, by individuals. People may manufacture salt for their own consumption and that of their cattle.

With regard to restrictions on organisations for self-protection, the Committee is of opinion that it is the inherent right of all to protect their own life and property and those of their neighbours and therefore all restrictions on them should be disregarded.

HARIJAN
July 19 1942

PERTINENT QUESTIONS

(By M. K. Gandhi)

1. If non-violent activity is neutralized by and cannot go along with armed violence in the same area, will there remain any scope for non-violent resistance to aggression in the event of India allowing foreign troops to remain on her soil and operate from here?

2. If the maintenance of India's freedom is allowed to be made dependent upon arms which, in the existing circumstances, will be led and controlled by Britain and America, can there be a feeling of real freedom experienced by the people of India, at any rate, during the duration of the war?

3. Whatever may be the terms of the 'treaty', if the Anglo-American military machine is allowed to operate for the 'defence' of India, can Indians play anything but a minor and subordinate role in the defence of this country?

4. Supposing the British, not from any moral motive but only to gain a political and strategical advantage for the time being, agree to a 'treaty' under which they are allowed to maintain and increase their military forces in India, how can they be dislodged afterwards if they prefer to remain in possession?

5. Is not the position postulated in the preceeding question comparable to the position that would arise if, for instance, Subhas Babu made a treaty with Germany and Japan under which India would be declared 'independent' and the Axis forces would enter India to drive the British out?

6. If the Congress, as Maulana Saheb has just stated, 'considers defence as armed defence only', is there any prospect of real independence for India, in view of the fact that India simply has not got the resources 'independently' to offer effective armed resistance to a formidable aggressor? If we are to think in terms of armed defence only, can India, to mention only one thing, expect to remain independent with her 4000 miles of coast-line and no navy and ship-building industry?

7. What material aid could India send to China today, even if she were declared 'independent' by the British?

A. (1) The flaw pointed out in the first question cannot be denied. I have admitted it before now. The tolerance of Allied troops by Free India is an admission of the nation's limitations. The nation as a whole has never been and never been claimed to be non-violent. What part is cannot be said with any accuracy. And what is decisive is that India has not yet demonstrated non-violence of the strong such as would be required to withstand a powerful army of invasion. If we had developed that strength we would have acquired our freedom long ago and there would be no question of any troops being stationed in India. The novelty of the demand should not be missed. It is a demand not for a transference of power from Great Britain to a Free India. For there is no party to which Britain would transfer such power. We lack the unity that gives strength. The demand therefore is not based on our demonstrable strength. It is a demand made upon Britain to do the right irrespective of the capacity of the party wronged to bear the consequences of Britain's right act. Will Britain restore seized property to the victim merely because the seizure was wrong? It is none of her concern to weigh whether the victim will be able to hold possession of the restored property. Hence it is that I have been obliged to make use of the word anarchy in this connection. This great moral act must give Britain moral status which should ensure victory. Whether without India Britain would have any reason to fight is a question I need not consider. If India is the stake and not British honour we should know. My demand then loses force but not justness.

Such being the case my honesty and honour require me to provide for the flaw. If to ask for the withdrawal of the Allied forces means their certain defeat, my demand must be ruled out as dishonest. Force of circumstances has given rise to the demand and also to its limitations. It must be admitted therefore that there will be little scope for non-violent resistance of aggression, with the Allied troops operating in India, as there is practically none now. For the troops are there today enjoying full mastery over us. Under my demand they will operate under the nation's terms.

2. If Britain's declaration is honest I see no reason why the presence of the troops should, in any shape or form, affect the feeling of real freedom. Did the French feel differently when during the last war the English troops were operating in France? When my master of yesterday becomes my equal and lives in my house on my terms, surely his presence cannot detract from my freedom. Nay, I may profit by his presence which I have permitted.

3. The conception in my scheme is that we do not want these troops for our defence or protection. If they left these shores we expect to manage somehow. We may put up non-violent defence. If luck favours us, the Japanese may see no reason to hold the country after the Allies have withdrawn, if they discover that they are not wanted. It is all speculation as to what can happen after withdrawal, voluntary and orderly or forced.

4. We assume their or rather British honesty. It would be not a matter of dislodging them, it is one of their fulfilling their plighted word. If they commit breach of faith, we must have strength enough non-violent or violent to enforce fulfilment.

5. Surely there is as much difference between the South Pole and the North as there is between the imagined conditions. My demand deals with the possessor; Subhas Babu will bring German troops to oust the possessor. Germany is under no obligation to deliver India from bondage. Therefore Subhas Babu's performance can only fling India from the frying pan into the fire. I hope the distinction is clear.

6. Maulana Saheb, it is well known, does not hold my view that any country can defend itself without force of arms. My demand is based on the view that it is possible to defend one's country non-violently.

7. India at present gives such indifferent and ill-conceived aid as the Allies think desirable. Free India can send men and material that China may need. India has affinities with China being part of Asia which the Allies cannot possibly possess and exploit. Who knows that Free India may not even succeed in persuading Japan to do the right by China?

Sevagram, 12-7-'42

THE WARDHA INTERVIEW

Soon after the final meeting of the Working Committee on Tuesday, the 14th July, Gandhiji met the various representatives of the press—Indian and foreign—and gave them a joint interview. To take up the last question first, Gandhiji made it clear that the Working Committee had worked on his own draft, there had been a lot of give and take, and accommodation. "Of course, if the resolution had not met with my approval," he added, "it would not have been passed. Whether it wholly meets with my approval or not is a difficult question to answer. It is not humanly possible for a group of people to agree on every sentence and every word. There always is room for accommodation, but I must say that the Working Committee has been most considerate to me."

A Mass Movement

"Is it possible," asked the A. P. (America) representative, "for you to tell us the things you might do after the All India Congress Committee meets and adopts the W. C. Resolution?"

"Is not that question a little premature? Supposing the A. I. C. C. vetoes the resolution, the whole thing wears a different aspect. But you may know that it will be a mass movement of a strictly non-violent character and then you can fill in the details. It will include all that a mass movement can include."

"Will you include closing of liquor shops and foreign cloth shops?"

"It will depend on the circumstances. I don't want rioting as a direct result. If inspite of all precautions rioting does take place, it cannot be helped." This question was not fully developed. It could not be, in the nature of things. The questioner meant perhaps picketing and peaceful persuation. Gandhiji had in mind perhaps looting of cloth shops—as there has been looting of grain shops—and so on. If these things take place, they will be the direct product of the economic situation and not of the movement.

If Imprisoned?

"Will you court imprisonment?"

"I am not going to court imprisonment. The struggle does not involve courting imprisonment. It is too soft a thing. We had, no doubt, made it a business to court imprisonment up to now, but there will be no such thing this time. My intention is to make the thing as short and swift as possible."

Quick came another question: "Will you resort to fasting if sent to jail?"

"It is not my desire this time, as I have said, to court imprisonment. But if I am dragged into jail, it is difficult to say what I may do. But I *can* fast, as I have fasted before now, though I should try to avoid such an extreme step so far as possible."

"Do you hope that negotiations may be opened by the British Government?"

Negotiations?

"They may, but with whom they will do it I do not know. For it is not a question of placating one party or other. For it is the unconditional withdrawal of the British Power without reference to the wishes of any party that is our demand. The demand is therefore based on its justice. Of course it is possible that the British may negotiate a withdrawal. If they do, it will be a feather in their cap. Then it will cease to be a case for withdrawal. If the British see, however late, the wisdom of recognising the Independence of India, without reference to the various parties, all things are possible. But the point I want to stress is this: viz. that there is no room left for negotiations in the proposal for withdrawal. Either they recognise Independence or they don't. After that recognition many things can follow. For by that one single act the British representatives will have altered the face of the whole landscape and revived the hope of the people which has been frustrated times without number. Therefore whenever that great act is performed, on behalf of the British people, it will be a red letter day in the history of India and the world. And, as I have said, it can materially affect the fortunes of war."

"After the recognition of Free India it starts to function at once?"

"Yes, from the very next moment. For, independence will be not on paper, but in action. But your next legitimate question would be—'How will Free India function?' And because there was that knot, I said 'Leave India to God or anarchy.' But in practice what will happen is this—If withdrawal takes place in perfect good-will, the change will be effected without the slightest disturbance. People would have to come to their own without disturbance. Wise people from among the responsible sections will come together and will evolve a Provisional Government. Then there will be no anarchy, no interruption, and a crowning glory."

Shape of Things to Come

"Can you visualise the composition of the Provisional Government?"

"I do not need to do so. But I am clear that it won't be a party government. All parties—including the Congress—will automatically dissolve. They may function later and when they do they may function complementary to one another, each looking to the other in order to grow. Then, as I have said, all unreality disappears like mist before the morning sun—we don't know how, though we witness the phenomenon every day."

"But" asked two of the Indian correspondents rather impatiently, "looking to all their past record will the British have the sense to come to terms?"

"Why not? They are human beings and I have never discounted the possibility of human nature's upward growth, and no other nation had ever had to face a freedom movement based not principally but wholly on non-violence."

"But there is an apparent contradiction in your resolution," persisted the friends. "The first paragraphs recount the fact that there is no intention on the part of the British to part with power. Then suddenly you postulate such a desire on their part!"

"There is nothing inconsistent. The facts are narrated in order to justify the suddenness of the demand for withdrawal. The other paragraphs refer to possibilities. Many things may happen and they may be altogether creditable to the British."

"May not your movement hamper the efforts of the Allies in China?"

"No, since the movement is intended to make common cause with the Allies, it should not hamper the Allied effort."

"But if there is no withdrawal, then disturbances are bound to happen?"

"You see ill-will is already there. It will grow apace. Immediately the movement is started, the ill-will may be changed into good-will if the British people respond. But even if they don't respond, when people make an effort to free themselves from a foreign yoke, ill-will needs no other opening. It takes a healthy turn instead of the bad turn that it has today."

"But only last week Mr. Amery reminded us that nothing is going to be done?"

"I am very much afraid that we shall have the misfortune to listen to a repetition of that language in stronger terms if possible. But it can't change the will of a group of people who are determined to go their way."

Free India's Contribution

"You desire to have India's freedom in order to help the Allies", was Mr. Edgar Snow's question, and the last question. "Will Free India carry out total mobilisation and adopt methods of total war?"

"That question", said Gandhiji, "is legitimate but it is beyond me. I can only say Free India will make common cause with the Allies. I cannot say that Free India will take part in militarism or choose to go the non-violent way. But I can say without hesitation that if I can turn India to non-violence I will certainly do so. If I succeed in converting 40 crores of people to non-violence, it will be a tremendous thing, a wonderful transformation."

"But you won't oppose a militarist effort by civil disobedience?" Mr. Snow pertinently asked.

"I have no such desire. I cannot oppose Free India's will with civil disobedience, it would be wrong."

M D.

A TWO MINUTES' INTERVIEW

The number of Indian and foreign correspondents in Wardha at the present moment is unprecedentedly large, but it is quite natural looking to the momentous issues that the Working Committee have got to decide. But it makes it difficult for one in Gandhiji's health and with his preoccupations to meet them all. I have had to ask them to wait until the end of the Working Committee deliberations when Gandhiji might meet them all at a single interview. But the correspondent of the *Daily Express* (London) who was among the first to arrive and who was not staying until the end said he would be content with just a couple of minutes' interview, and Gandhiji acceded to his request. He had made up his mind that if the demand for withdrawal which seemed to gather strength every day was rejected, there would be some kind of a movement. So he asked:

"Would you say that your movement will make it more difficult or less difficult for us to keep the Japanese out of India?"

"Our movement," said Gandhiji, "will make it more difficult for the Japanese to come in. But of course if there is no cooperation from Britain and the Allies, I cannot say."

"But", said Mr. Young, "think of the war as a whole. Do you think that your new movement will help the Allied nations towards victory, which you have said you also desire?"

"Yes, if my submission is accepted."

"What do you mean by your submission?— That Britain should offer non-violent battle?"

"No, no. My submission that British rule in India should end. If that is accepted victory for the Allied powers is assured. Then India will become an independent power, and thus a real ally, while now she is only a slave. The result of my movement, if it is sympathetically responded to, is bound to be speedy victory. But if it is misunderstood by the British and they take up the attitude that they would like to crush it, then they would be responsible for the result, not I."

This was far from convincing Mr. Young. He would not think of any movement with equanimity. So he made an appeal to Gandhiji's sentiment — a sentiment he had more than once expressed:

"Mr. Gandhi, you have been in London yourself. Have you no comment to make on the heavy bombings which the British people have sustained?"

"Oh yes. I know every nook and corner of London where I lived for three years so many years ago, and somewhat of Oxford and Cambridge and Manchester too; but it is London I specially feel for. I used to read in the Inner Temple Library, and would often attend Dr. Parker's sermons in the Temple Church. My heart goes out to the people, and when I heard that the Temple Church was bombed I bled. And the bombing of the Westminster Abbey and other ancient edifices affected me deeply."

"Then don't you think," said Mr. Young, "it would be wiser to postpone your movement until we

have settled with the Germans and the Japanese ? "

" No, because I know you will not settle with the Germans without us. If we were free, we could give you cent per cent cooperation in our own manner It is curious that such a simple thing is not understood. Britain has today no contribution from a free India. Tomorrow as soon as India is free, she gains moral strength and a powerful ally in a free nation — powerful morally. This raises England's power to the *n*th degree. This is surely self-proved."

Sevagram, 11-7-'42 **M. D.**

CASUAL NOTES

Indian News in England

Excerpts from British newspapers just received give one a fair idea of the kind of news from India on which Britain is fed. Thus the Calcutta correspondent of the *Star* writing towards the end of April asserted that " Gandhi has become a lone voice crying in the wilderness of non-violence, " that it meant " definitely the end of the Mahatma as an Indian political leader. " That however represents his views. As for news this is what he has to say:

" I was present at Allahabad over the week-end, when Nehru was badly heckled and almost assaulted. The taunts hurled at Nehru, coupled with the obvious annoyance at the inability of the Congress leaders to give a lead to the Congress, showed me more plainly than I have seen before how easy it would be for a real Indian leader, with a policy of practical value and general compromise, to stride on to the stage and hold his position as the man of the hour. True, I would not be so bold as to state that there is such a man in the offing. The Madras Congress leader, Mr. Rajagopalachariar may turn out just the man."

The correspondent visualises " a trial of strength between Pandit Nehru and Mr. Rajagopalachariar ", of which I am sure both are equally unaware.

Another Calcutta correspondent — the representative of the *Observer*, gave this wonderful evidence of his capacity to understand what Gandhiji says and writes:

" He (Gandhiji) has also made clear that whereas men must on no account fight, women are expected to defend their honour themselves, since ' God has given them nails and teeth. ' Naturally, these teachings affront the manhood and commonsense of the majority of the Indian public and also Indian women, who in some parts of Bengal are organising themselves and asking for arms to defend themselves."

At The Old Game

That however may be dismissed as arising out of ignorance or of stupidity. What is far more subtle and insidious is Sir Stanley Reed's analysis of the breakdown of the Cripps proposals. He writes in the *Spectator* :-

" Far deeper was the eleventh-hour demand that the executive authority should be forthwith transferred to a cabinet of Indian leaders, untrammelled by any control of the Viceroy or the British Cabinet. Sir Stafford's analysis of that proposal is conclusive; it would vest sole authority in a nominated, non-responsible irremovable body, dominant over the minorities, and free to keep or break the pledges to which the British Government stands irrevocably committed.

" Were these the basic reasons for the rejection of the Declaration ? I suggest not. Behind this facade lie deep-rooted forces — on the one hand, the refusal of the Congress to compromise on any solution which does not leave it in entire command of the destinies of India, without qualification or reserve; on the other, with the minorities, the tremendous but intangible influence of fear. The great body of Moslems, with the Scheduled Castes, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Sikhs, fear that their political, social and economic rights will be insecure under a government entirely dominated by Congress or, in other words, caste-Hindus. When we speak of minorities let us be clear what we mean. During the Second Round Table Conference figures were produced, and not challenged, showing that the " minorities " represent fifty-two per cent. of the Indian people. Until there is some abatement of Congress pretensions, and a genuine appeasement of minority fears, no final settlement is possible."

For one thing the demand for cabinet responsibility was not an eleventh hour demand, but the demand for the written implementation of a verbal promise that Sir Stafford had been throughout the negotiations manking. That the Cabinet, if it had been created, was not to be a Congress Cabinet but a mixed one, every one knew. And that the proposals would have no meaning without a genuine cabinet is conceded even by Edward Thompson :

" The break clearly came over the matter of cabinet government. Most people will agree that the division of defence functions finally offered covered all that could be fairly asked in war-time — if the Government had been a genuine Cabinet."

The reference to the Second Round Table Conference and the " Minorities " Pact is mischievous in the extreme. The statement that the clever figures were not challenged is an astonishing statement. Sir Stanley knows very well indeed that the ' minorities ' do *not* represent fifty-two per cent. of the Indian people, and that the Congress is not synonymous with caste-Hindus. But having backed the Muslims, they must adopt their argument, however absurd it may be.

But we simply refuse to enter into this controversy now. The Congress demand for the withdrawal of the British rule is the rebellion of an anguished people against the diabolical game of divide and rule, and the refusal to allow the Britisher any longer to arbitrate between different sections of Indians. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru would weigh his words fifty times before he uttered them, and when he said he would not reconcile himself to " dictator Amery's " dictation, he meant more than he said. The expanded Council wherewith an attempt is being made to bamboozle America — all the British papers make no secret of the fact that the Cripps proposals were made in order to appease America — is neither national nor Indian. What India wants is not a Council nominated by Britain but by a Free India after the British have made their exit from the Indian stage.

A Dictatorship

That today it is a dictatorship — whether it is of Lord Linlithgow or Mr. Amery makes not the slightest difference — is not denied even by the Britishers themselves. Sir Lionel Haworth, writing in a British journal, thus describes the limitless powers of the Viceroy: —

"While in fact the Viceroy works through the established system in India, he can at any time assume powers which equal, if they do not exceed, the powers which are held by the President of the United States of America.

"These powers are in hereditary descent from Clive and Warren Hastings, limited only by the necessary changes which have come from the march of time.

"Let us take a few concrete examples. Could the Viceroy introduce conscription into India? The answer is 'yes'. . .

"Could he take over factories and devote them to Government work as we have done in England? Again the answer is yes. But all factories are already working overtime in Government work. In both circumstances he has only to promulgate an ordinance signed by himself and his order would become law.

"He can take over land that is necessary for defence, under powers which are already in existence. He can build new forts and take any other defence measures that are necessary. He can build aerodromes or he can improve ports and harbours. He can move troops and evacuate civilians, as indeed has alrealy been done at Madras. . . .

"Thus it will be seen that there is no limit to what the Viceroy can and may do, and a refusal of the Congress to take part has little effect on the actual war-work."

It is from this dictatorship that the nation wants to get free and would not hesitate to launch a struggle for it.

An Englishman's Analysis

That it is impossible to fool all people at all times is apparent from a largely attended meeting of the Richmond Labour Party which was addressed by George Phippen. Having referred to Britain's broken promises after the last war, he traced the history of the nationalist movement and analysed the causes of Sir Stafford Cripps' failure. The *Thames Valley Times* gives a long report of his speech from which I take the following extract:

"Sir Stafford Cripps' mission had failed because the Indian leadership was not satisfied that the Government set up during the war would be truly national, representing free India; that the suggestions meant an extension of the power of the Viceroy or his council, and did not give India sufficient initiative to win the war. According to his statement his own view did not differ widely from that expressed by Amery that India could get her freedom only to the extent that she was completely united. Only Fascist countries could get near that because they were able to smash opposition. We were united to wage war, but we knew that the moment war ended, there would be a good deal of disagreement in Great Britain. So with India. South Africa had only shown a bare majority for entering the war, but no one suggested taking away self-government from South Africa. One was driven to the conclusion that Indians had not received freedom because they had not been prepared to fight for it.

"Reasons advanced for the British control of India were the same as those advanced by Japan for the control of China — that it was a big country, full of internal dissensions, backward economically and politically, and that it was our duty to take charge.

"Indian people would eventually get their freedom, and it was very much better if they got it, as the result of a decent deal between the two countries than as the result of a violent quarrel; we saw legacies of bitterness in Ireland, where we could not use the naval bases in the west.

"In answer to questions, the speaker said that the Soviet Union had created harmony in 20 years, in spite of differences of race, language and standards of living. It seemed marvellous that the Indians had not exploited the present situation to the extent they might have; the British Government had exploited the fact that they were anti-Fascist and did not want to hinder the war.

"Asked if there would be civil war if we cleared out, the speaker said the implication was that they were a violent people; this came from Christendom, which was at war for the second time in 20 years."

Sevagram, 11-7-'42 **M. D.**

Notice

Readers will please note that a branch of the Navajivan Karyalaya has been recently opened at Surat (Kanpith Bazar) and at Rajkot (Savani Buildings, Sadar). Copies of the three weeklies, *Harijan* (English), *Harijanbandhu* (Gujarati) and *Harijansevak* (Hindustani), and of our Gujarati monthly, *Shikshana ane Sahitya*, as also our publications, will be available there. The subscriptions for the weeklies and the monthly will also be received there.

Manager

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